2019–Modified Benchmark 2

**Selection 1**

***This selection below is from Anne Hall Whitt’s autobiography slightly modified, The Suitcases. Read it to learn about a very influential time in her life.***

1. The days at home were long and lonely. While my father was at work, Grandfather took care of us (my older sister Betty, my younger sister Carolyn, and myself) as best he could. But he did not go for walks anymore and would spend most of the day in bed, sometimes rousing just enough to ask if we were all right or to tell Betty how to keep the fire going.
2. My father stayed lost in his sadness—the laughter and songs were gone. It was as if his vision of the future had disappeared completely. Each day when he left for work he locked the door and told us not to open it for anybody. The house seemed huge now with silence through it. Betty would read to us, but mostly we sat in our rocking chairs by the window and waited for our father to come home. When Carolyn cried, I tried to make her laugh the way I used to. I prided myself on the funny faces I could make, and I could talk like Donald Duck. But she screamed at me to stop.
3. When my father came home in the evening, he took us to a Wimpy’s hamburger stand for dinner. Then we walked until my legs hurt. Sometimes we walked around town and other time we sat on the benches, watching people and cars go by. My father never sang anymore or put us on his shoulders – he seemed sad and lost in his own world.
4. Our days were all the same, until one morning there was a knock at the door. We were very still, hoping whoever it was would go away. But the knocking became louder and a woman’s voice demanded, “Open this door!” Betty went to see who it was. Betty had become our leader, Carolyn and I looked to her for the answers to everything. After all she was the oldest.
5. When Betty opened the door, a woman in a black suit and carrying a note pad stepped inside and stared at the three of us. “Well, they were right,” she said. Then she went from room to room asking, “Who built this fire?” “Why is there no food in the freezer? When was the last time you had a bath?”
6. As for the fire, Betty built it each morning. The freezer had been empty since their mother died, but there was peanut butter and crackers for lunch. The last time we had a real bath was when Aunt Carrie had put the three of us in the tub the morning of the funeral.
7. “Well, this will never do,” said the woman. She went to her car and returned with three brown cardboard suitcases. Giving one to each of us, she spoke sharply. “I want you to put your clothes in these and be quick about it.”
8. After packing, the woman took us out to her car and we rode away. We did not look back at the house, and were too afraid to speak. The girls never returned to their home.

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**Questions for Selection 1**

1. What seems to have happened to the family **before** this selection takes place?
   1. The girls moved to a new house
   2. The girls’ mother died
   3. The girls’ father got a job at the courthouse
2. According to the information in paragraph 3, what is the **greatest change** in the father?
   1. He won’t let them go out of the house
   2. He works very hard every day
   3. He never sings anymore
3. What is **NOT stated directly** in the story, but can be **inferred**?
   1. The sisters never returned to their home
   2. The lady brought three suitcases with her.
   3. The girls’ father was a good man, but too over sad over the loss of his wife to be a good father.
4. Based on the information in paragraph 2, which best **describe the house**?
   1. Smooth and quiet
   2. Small and close
   3. Large and silent
5. What is the overall **tone** of this selection?
   1. Exciting
   2. Humorous
   3. Sad
6. According to the information in paragraph 4, which of the following shows how the **children’s lonely life was affecting them**?
   1. Sat very still when there was a knock at the door
   2. Prided themselves on the funny faces they could make
   3. Had peanut butter and crackers for lunch each day

**Selection 2**

***This selection below is a slighted modified opening of Hatchet, a novel by Gary Paulsen. As you read, try to imagine what Brian is seeing and feeing.***

1. Brian Robeson stared out the window of the small plane at the endless green northern wilderness below. It was small plane, and the engine was so loud, so roaring and consuming and loud, that it ruined any chance for talking to someone else.
2. Not that Brian had much to say. He was thirteen and the only passenger on the plane with a pilot named---what was it? Jim or Jake or something—who was in his mid-forties and who had been silent as he worked to prepare for take-off. In fact since Brian and come to the small airport in Hampton, New York to meet the plane, the pilot had spoken only five words to him.
3. “Get in the copilot’s seat.”
4. Which Brian had done.They had taken off and that was the last of the conversation. There had been the beginning excitement, of course. He had never flown in a single-engine plane before and to be sitting in the copilot’s seat with all the controls right there in front of him, as the plane clawed for altitude leveling off at six thousand feet, jerking and sliding on the wind, had been interesting and exciting. But in five minutes they had leveled off, the pilot had been silent, staring out the front window and the sound of the engine had been all that was left. Brian could see the sea of green trees that lay before the plane’s nose and flowed to the horizon, spread with lakes, swamps, and wandering streams and rivers.
5. Now Brian sat, looking out the window the sound thundering through his ears, and tried to reflected on what had lead up to his taking this flight.
6. The thinking started.

Always it started with a single word.

**Questions for Selection 2**

1. What is Brian’s **attitude** toward this flight?
   1. He is amazed at the wilderness below
   2. He is anxious to get to his destination
   3. He feels indifferent, no feelings, about the experience
2. Based on the information in Paragraph 2, which of the following best **describes the pilot**?
   1. Happy-go-lucky
   2. Impersonal
   3. Angry
3. Based on the information in Paragraph 1, which of the following best **describes the plane**?
   1. Smooth and quiet
   2. Small and noisy
   3. Fast and powerful
4. Which of the following references toward the plane is an example of **personification**?
   1. “It was a small plane…”
   2. “…the plane clawed for altitude…”
   3. “…leveled off at six thousand feet.”